

### REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in the above referenced patent application. Claims 1-3, 5, 7-9, and 11-18 have been rejected and claims 4, 6 and 10 have been objected to. By this response, originally filed claim 4 has been cancelled and claim 1 amended to incorporate the elements and limitations of claim 4. No new matter has been added.

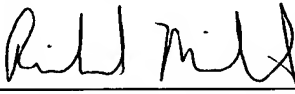
The Examiner has rejected claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. The Examiner alleges that the best mode contemplated by the inventor has not been disclosed. Applicant disagrees. The Examiner states that the Applicant's patent application contains evidence of concealment of the best mode. Applicant strongly disagrees. The Examiner has equated typographical mistakes to concealment of the best mode, this is not the case. The Examiner states that the specification discloses element 20 as being both end connectors and structural straps. Applicant has amended the specification and figures to identify the end connectors as element 20 and the structural straps as element 21. The Examiner states that "figure 7 does not show any structural member 18." However, a review of FIG. 7 clearly shows structural elements 18. FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view with the cross-section being taken through the elements 18. Accordingly, when viewing FIG. 7, one is looking directly down onto the elements 18. The Examiner also states that no larger structural members, as disclosed in the specification, are shown. However, FIG. 1 clearly illustrates structural members 18 of differing sizes. For at least these reasons, Applicant requests that the section 112, first paragraph rejection, be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has also rejected claims 1, 2, 5, and 7-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b), and claims 3 and 11-18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). However, the Examiner has indicated that claims 4, 6, and 10 would be allowable if amended to include the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant has amended claim 1 to include all of the limitations of claim 4 and any intervening claims and claim 4 has been cancelled.

Appl. No. 10/643,447  
Amdt. dated April 26, 2005  
Reply to Office Action of Oct. 20, 2004

Based on the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is now in condition for allowance. Should any matter remain unresolved with the filing of this amendment, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact Applicant's representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Richard R. Michaud  
Registration No. 40,088  
Attorney for Applicant

Michaud-Duffy Group LLP  
306 Industrial Park Road, Suite 206  
Middletown, CT 06457-1532  
Tel: (860) 632-7200  
Fax: (860) 632-8269